

**Legislative Testimony
Appropriations Committee
Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments
HB 5037 An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30,
2023
February 23, 2022**

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Raven Henderson. I am a pediatric dentist in the town of Middlebury, but first and foremost, I am a parent. My son, Luke, is 8 years old, and as part of a school project, he is working on people from Connecticut who made a significant impact in history.

We visited Hartford last week and learned of how Nathan Hale, at the young age of 21, gave his life to help his fellow man and his country. That made me think about what type of legacy I will leave. What can I do to make a difference?

As a pediatric dentist, I have the amazing responsibility to teach children how to care for their oral hygiene. Thankfully, in Connecticut, many kids have access to Husky that allows them to have exceptional dental care. A big part of my job is to also care for the children who have special needs like autism spectrum, etc. These kids quickly become adults but have found their dental home in the pediatric office. Some of them will lose the care that they so desperately need once they come of age forcing them to seek expensive, emergency care in the hospitals. It is so much better to keep these adult patients on a bi-annual routine in order to prevent dental problems before they become costly emergencies in the hospital system. One lesson my father always taught me was that "cheap becomes expensive very fast." If we, as a state, are always looking for a quick, cheap fix, it will hurt us in the long run.

My plea to you is to consider increasing the fees for Husky dental care for adult patients that would include our special needs population. We do not have to do anything as self-sacrificing as Nathan Hale did to lay down his life for his country, but we could do something small to help our fellow man. Let this be our legacy.

Sincerely,

Raven Henderson DDS